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ABSTRACT

Barriers re-entry women often encounter as they attempt to use basic support services at colleges and universities are described, and ways in which the accessibility and quality of such services may be improved are suggested. The following services are covered: information services, transportation and commuter services, housing and food services, medical insurance and health care services, student employment and graduate placement services, legal services, and extracurricular activities. A wide range of possible actions, many based on currently operating programs, is cited so that institutions can pursue those most appropriate to their individual circumstances. Information on Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 is included. It is concluded that through careful coordination among support service offices, dissemination of information, and periodic self-evaluation, an institution can provide more accessible support services to all students and be responsive to the special needs of the growing re-entry population. A selected list of resources is included, along with a field evaluation questionnaire for the draft of this paper. (SW)

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ED196338

Field Evaluation Draft

project on the status and education of women

Student Support Services: Re-entry Women Need Them Too*

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WANTED: Your Opinion

As part of its WEEA project on the educational needs of re-entry women and other nontraditional postsecondary students, the Project on the Status and Education of Women seeks your reactions and comments on each one of the papers developed. Please help us by filling out the brief questionnaire at the back of this paper and return it by December 15, 1980 in the pre-paid envelope we have provided. We look forward to receiving your suggestions.

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INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities have generally provided an array of on-campus support services to assist their students. Now, however, the student population is changing. Increasing numbers of adult women who have interrupted their education are returning to colleges and universities or are considering doing so. In order to attract re-entry women and to assist them in achieving full participation once they are on campus, institutions may wish to examine how existing support services can best help re-entry women and to decide whether additional services are necessary.

Support services vary from campus to campus. However, almost every institution provides some basic services such as housing and food service, medical insurance and health care programs, student employment and graduate placement services, and extracurricular activities. Some institutions also offer special transportation services or facilities for student commuters as well as legal services. Most institutions distribute publications to make potential students aware of what services are available on their campuses and to help enrolled students use support services effectively.

Re-entry women may need particular support services, such as on-campus child care facilities, counseling, financial aid, and refresher courses in basic skills, as well as information on transfer and residency requirements, graduate study, alternative degree options and related issues. The Project on the Status and Education of Women has explored each of these areas in a separate paper.[1] However, re-entry women also need many of the basic support services provided for traditional 18-22 year old students, but existing support services may not be equally accessible to or suitable for them.

Re-entry women, for example, are more likely than their classmates to be married and/or to have children, and less likely to reside on campus. They may find it difficult to learn about support services and even harder to make use of them. If, for instance, the student employment office or health care clinic is open primarily during those hours when re-entry women are in class or attending to responsibilities away from campus, they may find it difficult to investigate student employment opportunities or to obtain affordable health care. Re-entry women who are employed in the community and have returned to school on a part-time or evening basis

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may find access to existing services and personnel even more difficult. Further, institutional policies and practices regarding campus employment, medical insurance, health care and other basic services may inadvertently exclude or discriminate against returning women students.

This paper briefly describes barriers re-entry women often encounter as they attempt to use basic support services and suggests ways in which the accessibility and quality of such services may be improved. The services covered in this paper include:

- Information Services
- Transportation and Commuter Services
- Housing and Food Services
- Medical Insurance and Health Care Services
- Student Employment and Graduate Placement Services
- Legal Services
- Extracurricular Activities

Institutions may also wish to evaluate whether their bookstores, libraries, and like facilities are open on sufficiently flexible schedules to allow re-entry women access to them, and whether these facilities are staffed by personnel able to familiarize re-entry women with innovations such as computer information systems which are now so widely used.[2]

Whether or not a particular suggestion is appropriate will depend on the characteristics of the institution and those of its re-entry students. A wide range of possible actions—many based on programs already operating on campuses around the country—are included so that institutions can pursue those most appropriate to their individual circumstance.[3] Because some of the barriers which limit the access of re-entry women also limit the access of other nontraditional students, institutions are likely to find many of the recommendations in this paper helpful in increasing educational opportunities and participation for other nontraditional students as well. Indeed, although re-entry women may have a more acute need for certain support services than adult students generally or than students of traditional college age, many of the suggestions made here may benefit all students.

INFORMATION SERVICES

Obtaining essential information about an institution and its services is generally more difficult for the re-entry woman than for her younger classmates. She is more likely to have been out of an academic situation for a sustained period, and less likely to have time to actively seek out such information either from staff or from other students. Consequently, many existing campus services may be underutilized by re-entry women who may be unaware of their availability.

Developing Information Materials and Services for Re-entry Women

Although most colleges and universities provide their students with extensive written materials before, during and after enrollment, the format and content of many of these publications may be inadequate or inappropriate for older students. Some student handbooks, for example, tend to be helpful primarily to those who are already substantially acquainted with the ways in which colleges and universities function and may not meet the needs of the re-entry woman enrolling in a postsecondary institution for the first time. Furthermore, in addition to detailed written materials, she may need a reliable personal source of information who can quickly and clearly provide answers to basic questions and advise her on where to go, whom to see, and how to acquire specific information about a variety of concerns.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Develop a booklet specifically designed to meet the needs of re-entry women.** The University of Maryland at College Park has issued a booklet called "Second Wind," a handbook for returning students. Compiled by re-entry students and staff of the Program for Returning Students, the handbook provides a list and description of support services particularly relevant to re-entry students along with the phone number of a person or office to call for additional information about each item.
- **Institute a "hot line" to help re-entry women obtain information about eligibility** for financial aid, campus and community housing, health services, etc. (Such a "hot line" might also serve as an aid in recruiting re-entry women.)
- **Develop a dial-access information system with two- or three-minute recorded messages that provide answers to routine questions.** The University of California at San Diego does this for all campus services.
- **Designate specific persons to work with re-entry women.**
- **Arrange for contact between the re-entry woman, a counselor, and an academic advisor.**
- **Establish a newsletter specially for re-entry students.** Such newsletters, which include information about re-entry students and programs of special interest to them as well as news about general campus activities and community adult services and activities, have been started by re-entry student associations and less formal groups of re-entry students on many campuses. The University of California at Santa Barbara has such a newsletter.
- **Include information for and about re-entry women in existing information services.** For example, the Women's Information Service for Education (WISE) at Middle State Tennessee University provides a wide array of services and information to women both on and off campus. In addition to programmatic activities such as counseling and career planning, a 24-hour crisis telephone line, and other services, it also provides specific information to women who are interested in returning to school or currently enrolled.

- **Publish a directory of adult students, faculty and staff willing to offer information and advice to potential or newly enrolled re-entry women.** The Center for Continuing Education of Women at the University of Michigan publishes a staff resource locator which includes pertinent professional and personal information about each resource person (e.g., "Graduate student and working wife and mother," "Graduate student and recently relocated single parent," "Professor of Geography and Associate Director for Instruction, Residential College") along with addresses and phone numbers. The directory also lists designated contact persons in various student services offices and in on- and off-campus service and professional groups.
- **Hold a special reception to introduce re-entry women to the women's network and career opportunities in the surrounding community.** At the University of California, Santa Cruz, for example, some 60 business and professional women greeted re-entry women students and shared information about women's groups and activities in the city. This sort of program often provides re-entry women students with both role models and information about career opportunities.

Recognizing Re-entry Women in Regular Campus Publications and Media Activity

While re-entry women often find specialized information services and publications such as those noted above to be very helpful, they also need to feel they are a welcome part of the institution they have chosen to attend. All too often, re-entry women feel their presence on campus is either regarded as an intrusion or ignored. One factor contributing to such feelings is the fact that many institutions rarely mention re-entry women in regular campus publications or other institutional media. Recognizing re-entry women whenever possible in the full range of institutional information sources will not only help re-entry women feel more at home on campus but may also help younger students become aware of the contributions re-entry women can make to their campus.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Evaluate current publications to insure that re-entry women are mentioned where appropriate.**
- **Revise the student handbook and other campus publications.** Institutions may wish to include a list of campus re-entry services and organizations, to describe the re-entry population on its campus, and to include pictures and mention of re-entry women where appropriate.
- **Inform public relations personnel about re-entry students and services.**
- **Brief the staff of college newspapers and radio stations on re-entry women.** Editors and broadcasters who are aware of the presence and needs of re-entry women are more likely to give coverage to issues of particular concern to re-entry women. Such coverage may help make the campus climate more congenial to re-entry women students and may also serve to attract potential re-entry women to the institution.

Coordinating Information Efforts

Providing information to and about re-entry women usually necessitates coordinating the efforts of several institutional departments such as admissions offices, campus publication and communciation offices, student services offices, and re-entry student associations where they have already been established.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Establish a committee (temporary or permanent) to evaluate information needs of re-entry women,** and to review current publications. Include re-entry women on the committee.
- **Develop a plan to disseminate materials in admissions packets, at registration, and in the community for potential students.**

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUTER SERVICES

Transportation to, from and around campus is a critical need for many re-entry women, particularly because they are more likely to commute to school than to live on campus. Re-entry women often already reside in a nearby or outlying area, and are likely to have families in the community and/or to be employed. Like other older students, some re-entry women prefer to retain a degree of independence from the academic community and may choose to live off campus. Women in rural areas may be effectively cut off from educational opportunities on campus because private and public transportation are unavailable or inadequate. Women in suburban or urban areas may find that the time, discomfort and even the danger of commuting—particularly for evening students—outweigh or seriously diminish the rewards of returning to school. Whatever their reasons, re-entry women are usually commuters and may need support services specifically designed to accommodate the commuting problems they are likely to experience.

Re-entry women are not alone: indeed, the majority of all postsecondary students are currently commuters. Fifty-six percent of all full-time students and almost 94 percent of part-time students live at home; most of these students drive their cars to campus.[4] Thus, transportation services provided by an institution are likely to serve all commuters as well as re-entry women.

Getting to School and Back

Institutions wishing to facilitate transportation to and from campus may consider coordinating their efforts with existing forms of transportation provided by community agencies. In some instances, re-entry women, as well as other student commuters, may be able to use existing special transportation services when arrangements have been made by their institutions.

Some institutions may wish to establish their own transportation services. In addition to providing much-needed transportation for student commuters, such a service also provides part-time paying jobs for students of all ages.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Work out agreements with community bus lines.** After re-entry and nontraditional students at Edmonds Community College (WA) participated in a study of transportation preferences and problems, the college reached an agreement with the city by which the municipal bus system would use the college and senior centers as regular bus route terminals.
- **Where possible make use of transportation services provided by municipal departments and community organizations.** Parks and recreation departments, the Girl Scouts, and boards of education often own and operate their own buses and will sometimes cooperate in the transportation of older students to campuses and other locations.
- **Arrange for dial-a-ride or dial-a-bus programs.** Frequently sponsored by local offices on aging, senior centers, retirement homes, etc., these programs usually pick people up at central points and deliver them to shopping centers, medical centers, college campuses, and other locations. Some programs will also transport people to any specific local destination.
- **Use tuition rebates to help commuting students defray the cost of driving to campus.** Using the slogan "You take the class. We'll pay the gas" in billboard and radio spots, Simpson College (IA) offers students a tuition reimbursement based on distance and frequency of trips.
- **Investigate rural transportation services.** Rural communities in Iowa have a county-operated program called "SEATS" (State Elderly Area Transportation System) which provides door-to-door transportation on 24-hour advance notice.
- **Establish a student minibus system.** Georgetown University (DC) operates five minibus routes in the greater Washington area and provides service for students travelling from off-campus housing to the main campus and also to the University's Law Center. Buses are operated by students employed part-time, and carry passengers with student IDs for a fare of 40¢.
- **Explore obtaining state or federal funding to help establish such a service.** A few colleges have purchased minibuses or jitneys with federal, state and/or local funds such as those available under Title III of the Older Americans Act administered by the Administration on Aging (AOA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The University of Nevada, Reno, coordinates the use of their own jitneys with city buses to provide transportation for people living within a 20-mile radius of Reno who need a ride to campus.

Given the large number of re-entry women and other students who regularly commute to school, institutions may also wish to coordinate a range of commuter services. Hood College (MD) has responded to the needs of its student commuters by:

- establishing a commuter affairs office with a commuter affairs specialist to answer questions and help deal with problems;
- setting up a commuter student union;
- providing emergency overnight housing and a lounge equipped with study space, kitchen, bathrooms with showers, and a sleeping and napping area furnished with bunk beds;
- publishing a "Commuter's Guide to Hood College" and a bimonthly bulletin with relevant articles; and
- extending office hours for all student services.

Parking

Since many re-entry women will drive to campus, they will need conveniently-located parking facilities. Distant parking may be particularly dangerous at night and in hazardous weather for re-entry women as well as for other student commuters.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Reserve a centrally located parking area for commuters.**
- **Give part-time students, including re-entry women, a parking lot sticker** at no charge, or at a fee less than that charged full-time students.
- **Mail maps of campus parking facilities and campus shuttle bus routes to re-entry women** in advance of their arrival on campus.
- **Advise re-entry women to use parking lots from which campus shuttle buses regularly pick up passengers.**

Getting Around Campus

Re-entry women with commitments such as family responsibilities and employment frequently need to get from class to class or building to building as quickly as possible. Particularly on large campuses where back-to-back classes may be held at some distance from one another and/or where students take evening courses, re-entry women and other students may need on-campus transportation and other services.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Minimize transportation problems by clustering classrooms, offices and other facilities likely to be used by re-entry women.** Harvard University (MA), for example, uses the Dudley House for non-resident undergraduates to house the Institute for Learning in Retirement, the continuing education offices, a library and a cafeteria. Where such consolidation is not possible, an institution might make a particular effort to locate classes for re-entry women close to the library, cafeteria and administrative offices.

- **Provide a buddy system or an escort service for re-entry women who are taking evening classes or studying late.** At many institutions, campus police will provide such a service.[5]

Bringing the Campus to the Students

Some institutions have decided to bring the campus to the students as well as bring students to the campus. The establishment of post-secondary education programs in off-campus locations, and of nontraditional programs such as "open universities" which allow independent study, have been particularly effective for re-entry women and others, especially in rural areas. Often, classes are held in such local sites as apartment complexes, churches and synagogues, libraries and community centers. In many instances, these programs serve to increase on-campus enrollment by providing re-entry women with a sample of the larger educational experience in a familiar setting.[6]

HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES

Until fairly recently, almost all older adults attending postsecondary institutions were likely to be residents in the immediate community and to attend classes on a part-time or evening basis. Consequently, providing on-campus housing and/or developing appropriate housing policies for re-entry students was rarely a matter for concern. However, the recent increase in full-time as well as part-time re-entry women and other re-entry students may make it advisable for institutions to evaluate their housing facilities and policies with particular attention to the needs of the re-entry population.

Providing Housing Options for Re-entry Women

Providing a variety of housing options may encourage women to return to school and also to facilitate their completion of a degree. Many re-entry women find it difficult or impossible to finance simultaneously both off-campus living arrangements and the costs of their own education, and therefore require long-term dormitory or other college housing accommodations. Others, especially single adult re-entry women, may find living in campus housing more conducive to their academic aspirations. Married re-entry women, especially those with children and who are new to the community, may need short-term family housing until they familiarize themselves with their new location and establish a permanent residence. Staying on campus just a few nights a week may provide an attractive alternative to re-entry women who take only a few courses but travel long distances to do so, and to those who wish to be freed from the routine distractions imposed by family and job responsibilities. Such temporary on-campus housing may be especially beneficial during examination periods for re-entry women who normally commute to campus.

Unfortunately, housing regulations and policies on some campuses may prove problematic for re-entry women. In the past, some married women students, both undergraduate and graduate, were excluded from all campus housing—including married student housing—unless their husbands were also students. Title IX prohibits different treatment of married or divorced men and women. Additionally, although single sex housing is permitted, housing for both sexes must be comparable in availability, cost and quality. Similarly, eligibility requirements for student housing which include age limitations may restrict re-entry women's access to an institution's housing facilities, and violate the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Housing for re-entry women, particularly those with families and/or jobs, may also be limited by policies that require students to take a certain number of credits per semester in order to be eligible for student housing.

Re-entry women who neither desire to nor are able to live on campus may also face difficulties. Some institutions require all full-time undergraduate students to live in dormitories and to eat their meals in institutional dining halls. Often these restrictions apply to students only during the first year or two of enrollment. However, regulations that require freshmen and sophmores to live on campus may have a discriminatory impact on women with families and/or women who already reside as adults in the local community, and thus may act as a barrier to their returning to school full-time. Unfortunately, even institutions which make exceptions to such regulations sometimes fail to publicize their willingness to do so, and potential re-entry women may be unnecessarily discouraged from applying.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Examine existing housing regulations** to assess whether or not they have a disproportionate and negative effect on re-entry women.
- **Survey re-entry women** to determine whether or not existing housing regulations and facilities are adequate.
- **Provide short-term housing** for part-time and non-resident re-entry women during examination periods.
- **Develop plans for emergency overnight housing** for use by commuter students when inclement weather makes travel difficult or impossible.
- **Designate rooms for full-time re-entry women within existing dormitories or establish separate facilities** for re-entry women who wish to share housing. For example, at Fairhaven College of Western State College (CO), re-entry women live together in the same dormitory.
- **Reserve space in existing dormitories or in off-campus facilities for weekend college students** who may wish to remain on campus those weekend evenings when classes are scheduled. A number of institutions which offer weekend colleges, such as Mundelein College (IL), The College of St. Catherine (MN), and Marymount College (NY), provide such facilities.
- **Reduce the number of credits required for students to be eligible to live in campus housing.** The University of Wisconsin at Madison, seeking to

ensure that low-cost university-owned housing was available to those students with the greatest need, made such arrangements for students who were single parents.

- **Encourage local residents to house re-entry students.** Some persons may be more willing to rent to students who are older.

Food Services

Lack of adequate food service may be a problem for re-entry women, particularly evening students who are juggling multiple responsibilities. On some campuses, cafeterias are geared to full-time resident students and operate only during regular meal hours. Other kinds of campus food services—such as snack bars and vending machines—are often located in dormitories or in the student union, and only rarely in classroom buildings. Thus, the re-entry woman who commutes directly from work to an evening class may find herself unable to purchase a nourishing snack or dinner either before class or during a class break.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Extend the hours of cafeteria service** where possible. In some instances, institutions provide limited service after regular hours.
- **Locate vending machines near classrooms.**
- **Provide a map at registration** showing locations and types of services—dining halls, cafeterias, snack bars and vending machines—and designating their hours of operation.

MEDICAL INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Colleges and universities usually offer medical insurance and/or health care services. However, the nature and extent of both can vary widely among institutions. Although some may provide no services whatsoever, most provide at least the services of a physician and registered nurse. A community college may offer only a list of referrals to area physicians, while a university with an affiliated medical school may provide extensive insurance coverage, regular health care and emergency services. As is the case with other services, however, re-entry women may find themselves unable to participate fully in the particular insurance plans and medical services their institutions provide. Moreover, they may also find they require some medical and emergency services beyond those usually offered by colleges and universities.

Paying for Medical Insurance and Health Care Services on Campus

How students pay for medical insurance and health care services varies from campus to campus. Often, students pay a mandatory comprehensive fee covering general college expenses upon enrolling in a particular institution. This single fee also typically covers the cost of medical insurance, use of the campus infirmary and some related medical expenses. At other institutions, however, students may pay a separate fee for medical insurance and/or health care services on either a mandatory or an elective basis.

Whatever form of medical insurance and/or health care is available on a specific campus, fees for such services are often only required of full-time students. Indeed, part-time students may not be eligible to apply for medical insurance or to use the institution's health care services. Thus, re-entry women (many of whom are part-time students) may find themselves without affordable insurance coverage unless they are employed and already participating in a group plan, or covered by a spouse's policy. Aside from the cost of individual insurance coverage—which may in itself be prohibitive for many re-entry women—some insurance companies have policies which in effect discriminate against the older woman who has returned to school. In some states, student health insurance policies are available at reduced rates for full-time college students only if they are between the ages of 19 and 26.[7]

Beyond their own need for health insurance coverage, women students who are married and/or have children may also need medical insurance plans that include coverage for their families, and that offer the option of extending coverage for a full twelve months rather than just the academic year.[8]

What the Institution Can Do

- **Evaluate existing health insurance policies to see if re-entry women are adequately served.** Include re-entry women in the evaluation process by surveying them for their opinions about existing policies, soliciting their suggestions for improvements, and having them serve on an evaluation committee. Also include on the committee personnel from health services, continuing education and other concerned staff.
- **Work with the insurance company to devise a plan that equitably serves part-time and full-time re-entry women.**
- **Offer medical insurance to all full-time, part-time, day and evening students.** Institutions may wish to charge a separate fee for these services if all students are not currently required to pay a comprehensive fee which includes medical coverage.
- **Ensure that medical insurance policies are free of age limitations** which may have a discriminatory impact on re-entry women.
- **Provide insurance plans which can be extended** to give continuous coverage throughout the calendar year via payment of a supplemental fee.
- **Offer students the opportunity to purchase family medical insurance.** Some colleges and universities have already begun to offer this option at costs comparatively less than similar plans available to individuals.

Health Care Services

Re-entry women may encounter some of the same barriers in gaining access to campus health care facili-

ties as in getting adequate medical insurance coverage. Part-time students may be ineligible to use health care facilities at all; moreover, services provided by college and university clinics may not address the medical problems common to women, and more specifically, to older women. At one prestigious eastern coeducational institution, students reported that no gynecological services were available on campus, although the university employed one full-time and several part-time psychiatrists.[9] Providing comprehensive medical and health care services for all women students, and particularly for re-entry women, may involve both an evaluation and an expansion of existing health care services and policies. Under Title IX, federally assisted institutions which provide full coverage health services are also obligated to provide gynecological care for students.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Evaluate existing health services to see if re-entry women are adequately served.** Include re-entry women in the process by surveying them for their opinions, soliciting their suggestions for improvements, and having them serve on an evaluation committee to include health science, continuing education and other concerned personnel.
- **Provide medical and health care services for all part-time students, including day and evening students.** Institutions may wish to charge a separate (prorated) fee for these services if all students are not already required to pay a comprehensive fee for them.
- **Provide medical and health care services on a flexible schedule so that such services are available to part-time and evening students** as well as to full-time day students. If additional hours are not feasible because of budgetary constraints, consider opening later one day so that the clinic can remain open that evening.
- **Insure that all health care services are free of inadvertent age discrimination.** If necessary, expand the health-care staff to include professionals who are familiar with problems common to women who have borne children and are knowledgeable about problems associated with menopause.
  - Consider including regular clinical care for re-entry women who are pregnant.
  - Encourage inclusion of re-entry women's issues within in-service training of personnel.
- **Offer clinics, lectures and discussion groups** on health-related topics of particular interest to re-entry women, such as contraception, menopause, and breast cancer.

Emergency Contact

Most colleges and universities make some provision for contacting parents of students in case of medical emergency. For re-entry women, particularly those with young children, the situation is reversed: re-entry women may also need services that will allow them to be contacted quickly on campus should a family emergency occur. A number of institutions have coordinated services for this purpose.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Provide re-entry women and other student parents with an emergency contact service.** The Program on Women at Northwestern University (IL) provides all women students with such a service. Women students leave the Program on Women's office telephone number with their child care providers, children's schools and/or husband's employer, and supply the Program with a copy of their own class schedules. The University of Maryland, College Park, offers a similar service.

Policies Concerned with Health Related Leave

Re-entry women may occasionally stay at home to care for ill family members for short or long periods. Institutions may need to develop specific policies to handle missed classes or extended absences due to family illnesses.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Develop health care related leave-of-absence policies** where such policies do not already exist.
- **Make faculty aware** that re-entry women may have legitimate need for rescheduling of examinations, etc., in instances of family emergency.
- **Arrange to tape lectures for students who must miss class because of health emergencies.** (The professor's permission will, of course, be necessary.)

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AND GRADUATE PLACEMENT SERVICES

Student employment services often work cooperatively with career-planning and/or financial aid offices to place students in appropriate part-time positions on campus or in the community. Their help may be of particular benefit to re-entry women, many of whom must struggle to pay college costs. Title IX and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibit colleges from discriminating on the basis of sex and age in student employment services. In some instances, however, institutions give job preference to students who qualify for work-study programs through which the federal government pays a major portion of the student's salary. These work-study programs are now open to part-time as well as full-time students,[10] but some institutions provide work-study positions for full-time students before considering elegible part-time students. Such practices may inadvertently have a disporportionate impact on part-time re-entry students, many of whom are women.[11]

Some personnel also give preference to married men over married women. Others may restrict women to traditional areas such as clerical jobs and waitressing.

These practices violate Title IX.

Aside from the impact of such institutional practices, re-entry women may also be disadvantaged by their newness in the academic community, and by other responsibilities that limit the time they can spend actively seeking part-time employment on or off campus.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Train personnel about federal and state laws relating to sex and age discrimination in employment** (see section on *Legal Considerations* for additional recommendations).
- **Gather data about re-entry women to evaluate how well student placement services aid re-entry women compared to other students.** Include data about part- and full-time students, as well as those seeking work-study positions.
- **Include information about cooperative education programs in materials distributed to re-entry women.** Such programs enable students to gain on-the-job experience in paid or unpaid internships while completing a degree.[12]
- **Post advertisements for on- and off-campus positions where re-entry women are most likely to see them,** such as the campus women's center, offices for re-entry programs, continuing education, career-planning, and financial aid.
- **Keep the student employment office open during hours when re-entry women are likely to have access to it.** If budget constraints preclude regular extended hours, extend the hours into the evening on certain nights of the week, keep the office open some weekend hours at the beginning of the semester, or open the office late one day each week so that it can remain open that evening.
- **Encourage the student employment services office to hire qualified re-entry women.** This may help other re-entry students learn about and use the office's services.
- **Encourage re-entry program offices, women's programs offices, and/or the campus women's center to employ re-entry women.** Re-entry women employed by such offices may gain by dealing with issues related to their own educational opportunities, and may also encourage the participation of other re-entry women. Some institutions have given such positions to eligible re-entry women as part of work-study programs.
- **Encourage academic and administrative offices on campus, as well as off-campus employers, to hire re-entry women.** Many re-entry women have already acquired business skills and may bring more experience to some positions than younger students.
- **Encourage efforts to place re-entry women in part-time jobs directly related to their career aspirations.** Many women return to college with clear career goals. Coordinating part-time employment with such goals may be relatively easy for the student employment office, and fruitful for both re-entry women and their employers.
- **Adopt a flexible approach to the employment of student hourly workers in jobs for which work is ongoing and daily deadlines are not usually imposed.** In such positions, re-entry women could work irregular hours convenient for them, and still meet the job's requirements by week's end. At the University of California at San Diego, for example, a student who qualifies for work-study may be able to work flexible hours.

Graduate Placement Services

Many of the recommendations for student employment services are appropriate for services seeking jobs for the institution's graduates. It may be of particular importance for placement services not only to educate employers about age and sex discrimination laws, but also to help employers understand the special needs and qualfications re-entry women may bring to post-graduation careers. As a group, re-entry women tend to have clear career goals, more experience and/or transferable skills than younger students.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Develop materials, workshops and other programs to help prospective employers understand the benefits of hiring re-entry women graduates.**
- **Provide information about sex and age discrimination.**
- **Encourage employers to provide opportunities for re-entry graduates with family responsibilities to share full-time professional positions and/or to hire part-time personnel.**

LEGAL SERVICES

Providing legal counseling for students is a relatively new undertaking for many colleges and universities. Where campus legal services are available, they usually include low-cost or free legal advice on a variety of issues, several of which may be more relevant to re-entry women than to traditional students. These may include divorce and custody matters and landlord-tenant disputes. Often, campus legal services give basic advice and refer students to inexpensive attorneys in the community if staff are unable to make court appearances on students' behalf. Institutions may wish to publicize and to expand the legal services they provide in order to accommodate the re-entry population.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Assure that persons providing legal services are knowledgeable about problems re-entry women may face,** particularly divorce and landlord-tenant disputes.
- **Develop a brochure describing legal services (if any) provided by the institution, and listing sources of legal help in the community, such as legal aid offices and bar referral services.**
- **Designate a member of the university's legal office to help handle students' legal concerns.**

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The campus is a place to learn not only through aca-

demic work, but also through participation in extracurricular activities. Such activities as student government, campus publications, and athletic and cultural events are an essential part of the educational experience. Because they provide a sociable alternative to scholarship as well as an opportunity for intellectual and personal growth, extracurricular activities are as important for many re-entry women as they are for younger students.

While some re-entry women may hesitate to participate in extracurricular activities, several programs designed with re-entry women and other older students in mind may encourage them to participate in a wide range of campus activities during non-class hours.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Evaluate extracurricular activities and programs in relation to re-entry women.** Include re-entry women in the evaluation process.
- **Evaluate student activity eligibility and fee policies** to be certain re-entry women are not excluded by virtue of non-resident or part-time status. Where possible, offer a reduced student activity fee.
- **Publicize local alumni events and open them up to all students. Make a special effort to invite re-entry women to attend.** George Washington University (DC) finds that inclusion in alumni activities puts re-entry women in touch with university-affiliated people their own age, and makes them more likely to become active alumnae themselves. (Moreover, some alumni who are in contact with re-entry students may also be stimulated to return to school.)
- **Develop activities for re-entry women and their families.** Many re-entry women have limited time available for extracurricular activities, and might participate more actively if they could do so with their families. Activities might include picnics, athletic/play times, family nature trips. **Where possible, charge a family rate for paid activities.**
- **Encourage student government and other campus groups to develop extracurricular activities that include both part-time and full-time re-entry students.** For example, the student government might sponsor special social events such as an annual dance or dinner for re-entry students.
- **Encourage and assist in the development of a re-entry student association.** Extend to such an association the same formal recognition and support typically given to other student organizations. The University of Minnesota, for example, has a group called "Students Older Than Average" (SOTA).
- **Encourage participation of re-entry women and other re-entry students in campus government.** Establish an advisory board composed of re-entry students to provide input on campus government decisions that might have particular impact on the re-entry population.
- **Encourage student governmental bodies and other student groups to hold meetings on evenings or weekends** so part-time and evening re-entry students are able to attend.
- **Designate a place for re-entry women to meet,** such as a lounge or a portion of the women's center. Include a bulletin board where students can leave and/or receive messages.
- **Support the establishment of a newsletter for re-entry women and other older students.** Many campuses have such newsletters staffed by re-entry students.
- **Distribute tickets** for extracurricular events such as athletic competitions, theater performances or movies in places re-entry women are likely to find easily accessible—both on and off campus. Issue free passes to some activities to encourage re-entry women to attend.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972[13]

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 generally prohibits sex discrimination in federally assisted education programs. More specifically, Title IX covers almost all areas of student treatment and activities, and prohibits services, rules or policies based on the sex of students.

- Institutions are **not** required to provide support services such as medical insurance and health care, housing, or student employment services.[14] However, whatever services an institution provides must be offered to all students regardless of sex.
- Services such as family planning which may be used by a greater proportion of students of one sex than the other, do **not** violate Title IX as long as all students have the opportunity to use these services if they so desire. Thus, services for re-entry students would not violate Title IX even if women used the services in larger numbers than men.
- Title IX bars rules and policies concerning student's actual or potential marital status, which make distinctions based on sex. For example, married male students could not be given preference over females in student employment services. An institution could, however, give preference to **all** married students over **all** unmarried students in employment services if it so desired, provided that the preference did not disproportionately affect one sex.
- Programs aimed at re-entry students must be open to both sexes. (Many services originally developed for returning women have long been open to men as well.) Programs aimed at special groups, such as older women, do not violate the Act, provided that men who wish to participate are not excluded. A description of such a program might read: "This program is primarily aimed at women who have been out of the work force and are returning to school. However, men who believe they could benefit from this service and

wish to participate may do so."

- Affirmative action is **not** required but may be undertaken by an institution to overcome the effects of conditions which resulted in limited participation by persons of a particular sex. The Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Education may require remedial action if discrimination is found.

Additional descriptions of how Title IX applies to specific support services appear in the sections on housing, student employment services and medical insurance and health services.

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975[15]

Age discrimination affects all people, but older women receive a "double dose" of discrimination—once because of their age and once again because of their sex. If the older woman is a member of a minority group or also handicapped, the problem is intensified. In education, age discrimination is not limited solely to senior citizens; it can begin as early as the mid-twenties, when a student may be labeled "too old" for a particular program or activity. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (effective January 1, 1979) prohibits "discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance." The Act, which contains some exemptions, is unique in that it does not define "age" to limit coverage to a particular group, such as those 65 or older.[16] It simply prohibits discrimination on the basis of age **at any age.**

Affirmative action by institutions to overcome the effects of past limited participation by certain age groups is permitted. Special programs or benefits for older students may be permitted if these benefits do not result in excluding otherwise eligible younger students.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Inform all personnel handling student services about the requirements of federal laws.** Conduct workshops and/or disseminate materials explaining the implications of these laws.
- **Develop a procedure to inform new staff of the legal requirements and prohibitions.**
- **Include a nondiscrimination clause concerning sex and age in materials describing specific student services and in recruiting materials.** (Title IX requires this concerning sex discrimination.)
- **Inform prospective re-entry women about grievance procedures for sex discrimination complaints.** (Grievance procedures are required under Title IX.)
- **Expand grievance procedures to cover age as well as sex discrimination.**

CONCLUSION

Inadequate or inappropriate support services can constitute a significant barrier to re-entry women's full participation in the academic and extracurricular life of the institutions they have chosen to attend. Lack of necessary services can impede enrolled re-entry women's efforts to complete a degree, and can discourage potential re-entry women from enrolling. Although student support services are provided by a number of administrators and offices—such as those in student affairs, employment, public relations, continuing education, re-entry programs, women's centers, etc.—these can all work together to shape the support services offered by their institution. Through careful coordination among support service offices, thoughtful and thorough dissemination of information, and periodic self-evaluation, an institution can make its support services more accessible to all its students and also responsive to the special needs of the growing re-entry population.

NOTES

[1]See "Barriers to Re-entry Women: College Transfer Policies, Residency and Graduation Requirements," "Campus Child Care: A Challenge for the '80's," "Financial Aid: Helping Re-entry Women Pay College Costs," "The Counseling Needs of Re-entry Women," "Obtaining a Degree: Alternative Options for Re-entry Women," and "Recruitment and Admissions: Opening the Door for Re-entry Women," as well as "Confidence and Competence: Basic Skills Programs and Refresher Courses for Re-entry Women" and the paper on part-time re-entry women students, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[2]For a discussion of re-entry women and new information resources on campus, see "Confidence and Competence: Basic Skills Programs and Refresher Courses for Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[3]A number of the recommendations which appear in different sections throughout this paper were obtained from *350 Ways Colleges are Serving Adult Learners*, the Future Directions for Learning Society, New York: The College Entrance Examination Board, 1979. In addition, many of the campus support services used as examples are described in *The Graying of the Campus*, a report of the Educational Facilities Laboratories, by Ruth Weinstock, 1978.

[4]"In Brief," *The Chronical of Higher Education*, October 22, 1979.

[5]See "The Problem of Rape on Campus," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1978.

[6]For more information on off-campus learning, see "Obtaining A Degree: Alternative Options for Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[7]Whether institutions offering such insurance are violating the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 is not clear.

[8]Elinor Lenz and Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz, *So You Want to Go Back to School: Facing the Realities of Re-entry*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977, p. 125.

[9]This example comes from "Barriers to Women's Participation in Postsecondary Education: A Review of Research and Commentary as of 1973-1975," by Esther Manning Westervelt, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975, p. 30.

[10]Formerly students enrolled at least half-time were eligible for work-study programs; under the current Higher Education Reauthorization Act, 10 percent of federal monies for work-study can be used by less than half time students.

[11]Whether this violates Title IX is not clear.

[12]For additional information on cooperative education, see "Obtaining a Degree: Alternative Options for Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[13]Education Amendments of 1972 (Sections 901-907) 20 U.S.C. Sections 1681-86 (1972). The Title IX regulation can be

found at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 and at 40 *Fed. Reg.* 21[illegible]-45 (June 4, 1975).

"Although not mandated by Title IX, continuing education programs, women's studies, women's centers, flexible programs, child care facilities and other supportive programs and policies may be viewed as a sign of commitment to the education of women in the event that a complaint is filed.

"Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. Sections 6101-6107 (1975). The final government-wide regulation for the Age Discrimination Act can be found at 45 C.F.R. Part 90 and at 44 *Fed. Reg.* 33768-88 (June 12, 1979). The Act also requires each federal agency to issue agency-specific regulations. At the time of this writing (Fall, 1980) agencies are in the process of issuing those regulations.

"Specifically, age distinctions may be used where they are:

- adopted in a federal, state or local statute;
- necessary to the normal operation of the program and can pass the four-part test set out in the regulation; or
- necessary in order to achieve a federal, state or local statutory objective and can pass the four-part test in the regulation.

SELECTED LIST OF RESOURCES

Books and Pamphlets

Astin, Helen, ed. *Some Action of Her Own, the Adult Woman and Higher Education.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Co., 1976. Available from D.C. Heath and Co., P.O. Box 3191, Boston, MA 02241. $19.87

Axelsek, Frank J. and Irene L. Gomberg. *Higher Education Panel Reports Number 33.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1977. Available from the Higher Education Panel, 1 Dupont Circle, Suite 829, Washington, DC 20036. Free.

Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. *Three Thousand Futures. The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1980. Available from Jossey-Bass, Inc., 433 California St., San Francisco, CA 94104. $21.00

Cernazanu, Joanna. *A Handbook and Evaluation Checklist for Women's Health Services in Student Health Centers.* OR: Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group, in press, 1980.

Gilder, Jamison, ed. *Policies for Lifelong Education,* Report of the 1979 Assembly, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1979. Available from AACJC Publication Sales Department, 1 Dupont Circle, Washington DC 20036. $5.00 (prepaid).

Lenz, Elinor and Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz. *So You Want To Go Back To School.* New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1977. Available from McGraw-Hill, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. $4.95

The Future Directions for A Learning Society Program. *350 Ways Colleges Are Serving Adult Learners.* New York: The College Entrance Examination Board, 1979. Available from The College Board, Publication Orders, Department C81, Box 2815, Princeton, NJ 08541. $2.00 (prepaid).

Weinstock, Ruth. *The Graying of the Campus,* A report of the Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1978. Available from Educational Facilities Laboratories, 850 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022. $8.00 (prepaid).

Articles

Benjamin, Esther. "Review Article: Barriers to Academic Re-entry Women and How to Overcome Them." Evanston IL: Program on Women, Northwestern University, October 1979.

Hooper, J.O. and G.B. March. "The Female Single Parent in the University." *Journal of College Student Personnel,* Vol. 21. No. 2, March 1980, p. 141.

Kasworn, Carol E. "Student Services for the Older Undergraduate Student." *Journal of College Student Personnel,* Vol. 21, No. 2, March 1980, p. 163.

McCrea, Joan. "The New Student Body: Women Returning to School." *Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors,* Vol. 43, No. 1, Fall 1979, p. 13.

Smallwood, Cathy Beckman. "What Do Adult Women College Students Really Need?" *Journal of College Student Personnel,* Vol. 21, January 1980, p. 65.

Westervelt, Esther Manning. "Barriers to Women's Participation in Postsecondary Education: A Review of Research and Commentary as of 1973-74." National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office 1975.

Journals

The Journal of College Student Personnel contains information about ways of improving student services at postsecondary institutions in addition to articles regarding research and other professional issues of common interest to college student personnel officers. Published bi-monthly, annual subcriptions are available at $7 for members of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and at $15 for non-members. Copies of single issues are available at $3 for members and $4 for non-members from the subscription manager, American Personnel and Guidance Association, 2 Skyline Pl., Suite 400, 5203 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041.

The Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors (NAWDAC) is a quarterly publication of articles of special interest to women, and which may be useful to student personnel administrators, deans, counselors and educators. Single copies are available at $3 and annual subscription at $12 from NAWDAC, 1625 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 624-A, Washington, DC 20006.

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October 1980

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: RE-ENTRY WOMEN NEED THEM TOO

FIELD TEST

You can assist us in evaluating this paper by completing the following short questionnaire. If you have additional comments, please use the back of this page or add another sheet. It will help us if you return this questionnaire in the enclosed pre-paid envelope by December 15, 1980.

Women's Re-entry Project
Project on the Status and Education of Women
Association of American Colleges
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

7

1. **What is your primary identification?** (Check One)
   a. ☐ College president or other administrator. Specify title .....
   b. ☐ College faculty member, lecturer, professor
   c. ☐ College student
   d. ☐ Elementary or secondary school teacher or administrator
   e. ☐ State or local education agency employee
   f. ☐ Federal employee
   g. ☐ Other. Please specify .....

2. **In addition, are you:** (Check All That Apply)
   a. ☐ An affirmative action officer or Title IX coordinator?
   b. ☐ Directly involved in programs affecting re-entry women?
   c. ☐ At a women's college?
   d. ☐ A member of a *campus* committee on women, women's center or women's group?
   e. ☐ A member of a *noncampus* women's group, women's center, or advocacy group (WEAL, NOW, National Women's Political Caucus, etc.)?
   f. ☐ A member of a women's professional society or women's caucus or committee of an academic discipline?

3. **If you are currently at a *postsecondary* institution:**
   a. Is it: ☐ public or ☐ private?
   b. Is it a: ☐ university ☐ other 4-year college. ☐ 2-year college or ☐ proprietary school?
   c. Is the total enrollment: ☐ under 1,000 ☐ 1,000 to 5,000 ☐ 5,001 to 10,000 ☐ over 10,000?
   d. In what state is your institution?.....

4. **Do you think this is a useful paper?**
   a. YES (Respond to **ALL** reasons that apply)
      1. ☐ to EVALUATE OR CHANGE POLICIES, such as .....
      2. ☐ to START NEW PROGRAMS OR EFFORTS to assist re-entry women, such as .....
      3. ☐ to REDESIGN OR IMPROVE EXISTING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, such as . . ..
      4. ☐ to IDENTIFY NEW RESOURCES
      5. ☐ to IMPROVE RECRUITMENT of re-entry women to campus by .....
      6. ☐ to TRAIN STAFF to work more effectively with issues regarding re-entry women
      7. ☐ to EDUCATE OR INFORM OTHERS about the issues. Specify whom. .....
      8. ☐ to EDUCATE MYSELF ABOUT THE ISSUES
      9. ☐ OTHER. Please specify .....
   b. ☐ NO, this paper is not useful because .....

5. **What, if any, *important* omissions were there from the paper? (Respond to *ALL* that apply)**
   a. ☐ NONE, it covered all aspects of the topic well.
   b. ☐ ISSUES should be described more fully. Please indicate how .....
   c. ☐ APPROACHES OR ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES were omitted. Please identify .....
   d. ☐ IMPORTANT MODELS OR INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS were not mentioned. Please identify .....
   e. ☐ KEY RESOURCES were not mentioned. Please identify .....
   f. ☐ OTHER. Please describe any other omissions or suggested additions. .....

6. **Did you find the paper to be clear, well organized and easy to understand?**
   a. ☐ Yes
   b. ☐ It could be improved by. .....

7. **If you found any factual errors or misleading statements in the paper, please identify them (indicating the page number, error or statement and include the correct information if possible). Use the other side of this page.**

8. **Please provide any additional comments or criticisms. Enclose other descriptive material, if desired, and use another sheet of paper if needed.**